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Die Ilias als Dichtung. By Carl Rothe. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh (1910). Pp. xii + 366. Mk. 5.40.

Professor Rothe has for thirty years been the constant reviewer of all works on the Homeric Question, being the regular contributor to Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, *Zeitschrift für das Gymnasialwesen*, and the *Wochenschriften*; he has also published original investigations of great value on this subject, especially on the importance of the contradictions and the repetitions in Homer. He began his career as a follower and disciple of Kirchhoff, and his early reviews were quite in the spirit of that great demolisher of belief in the unity of the *Odyssey*. I take it that no scholar is more familiar with everything that has been written on the Homeric Question and all that it involves. In spite of his early beliefs and in spite of all the radical books and pamphlets he has studied Professor Rothe has reached the conclusion that the reasons for believing in a single Homer are unanswerable and that the arguments against this belief rest on too narrow a vision or on false assumptions. He is not a unitarian in the sense of a Nietzsche or a Bergk who sacrificed much to save a little, but one who accepts the tenth book, the twenty-third and the twenty-fourth as part of the same unity, a unity due entirely to one creative poet.

The book consists of two parts, one devoted to meeting the arguments of disintegrating criticism, the other to an analysis of the *Iliad* in which the harmony and poetic plan of the whole are set forth.

The method of the author is to consider each scene with its difficulties as it relates to the whole, and to observe whether an apparent contradiction or failure is peculiar to this one scene or characteristic of the method of the entire poem. Thus the failure of Odysseus to answer the questions of Arete, the wife of Alcinous, which was the starting point for the theory of Kirchhoff, loses its cogency when we find such failures to answer questions occurring frequently in Homer. A higher poetic necessity explains apparent slips or contradictions. Thus the argument that Hector should not have left the field of battle, but should have sent some inferior soldier to the City to bid the women sacrifice to Athena, fails to note that the real purpose of Hector's going was to permit the poet to relieve the strain of constant fighting and to allow the description of the scene between Hector and Andromache. Homer, like Schiller, cared little for logical motives; his thought was centered on describing the individual scene. Thus the long and seemingly inopportune speech of Nestor to Patroclus in the eleventh book took the hearer's mind away from fighting and also filled up the interval between the attempted retreat of the Greeks and their arrival within the

walls. The long delayed return of Patroclus to Achilles gave time to describe the events leading up to the sixteenth book, since it is inevitable that the intervening books could have had no place if Patroclus had returned at once and entered the fight, and he could not have remained inactive in the tent of Achilles. Thus, despite the difficulties inherent in Hector's taking from Patroclus the armor of Achilles, the exchange serves to advance a higher poetic purpose, since if Achilles had had his own armor when told of the death of Patroclus he could hardly have been restrained from entering the fight at once, and the evening of a crowded day must have sufficed for the deeds culminating in book twenty-two. Thus by the device of the exchange of armor Achilles is forced to wait for another day; there is then time for the completion of great events, and the tired hearer is relieved from the strain of fierce fighting by listening to the description of peaceful scenes in the smithy of Hephaestus. Thus fresh hearers and a new day are prepared for the impending tragedy.

The argument against the unity of the *Iliad* that the victories of the first day's fighting in which Diomedes and others easily surpass the best of the Trojans eliminates the 'wrath' of Achilles, since it renders him unnecessary, has until now seemed to me most cogent, but Rothe remarks that the success of the Greeks on this day was necessary for two reasons: first, the song was for Greeks and their national feeling could not have brooked initial defeat, secondly, the battle was due to a broken truce, and the sense of justice had been outraged if such treachery had been immediately followed by victory.

Just as the scene between Hector and Andromache, the long speeches of Nestor, the description of the making of the shield of Achilles take the thought of the hearer away from pictures of bloodshed, so it is a trait of Homer constantly to shift the scenes. The motive may be weak, but the eye of the poet was not on the motive, but on the scene; so he not only shifts the scene but varies the description of like events. Thus the warrior has now a Mycenaean shield, now a round shield, now a coat of mail, now the skin of an animal, and he fights with a sword, a spear, a bow, a rock; one warrior fights with a spear in each hand, and another with an iron club. Homer describes hundreds of fights; however great his genius such descriptions must become tiresome in the extreme, if all the warriors wore the same armor, but the poet's genius manifested itself exactly in this that he varied the things to be described.

Rothe argues that the age of a custom or the antiquity of a hero has no bearing on the relative position of the part in which they are described; a traditional hero may be joined to a creation of

the poet; Circe may belong to earlier songs, Calypso may be no older than the *Odyssey*, yet both be original in their present place in Homer. Thus no one part of the poems can be selected as older because older myths or customs are contained in it.

The author advances strong proofs that there are no arguments, of value, based on meter, myth, custom, language, or vocabulary for placing any part of the *Iliad* at an earlier age than any other. The real question at issue is one of poetry and all other issues are subordinate. If a scene is conceived in the spirit of the whole and contributes to the poetic end, it is part of the conception of the poem, even if it involves contradiction in minor matters.

This book of nearly four hundred pages is an abstract of the learning of thousands of pages of others, as well as the condensed beliefs of its author, so that a digest is impossible; it must be read in full to be appreciated. It contains the most telling arguments against all theories which have substituted others for an original, creative poet, and furnishes not only negative, but positive reasons for accepting once more the Homer of Aristotle and Aristarchus.

It is most significant that this great scholar should have begun as a follower of Kirchhoff, then gradually have become a believer in Homeric unity, and that Muelder in this same year should have completed a similar transformation, so that the one who a few years since was the most radical disciple of Wilamowitz should have made the first thesis to be established in his recent book the proposition that "The *Iliad* is a unity composed according to a single plan".

Professor Rothe never indulges in vague or uncertain conjectures, but keeps well within the realm of sober sense and ascertained fact; therefore he has written a safe guide for all Homeric students. In my judgment this is the best fruit of Homeric scholarship and no other book on Homer is so indispensable.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.

JOHN A. SCOTT.

MEETING OF THE NEW YORK LATIN CLUB

The New York Latin Club held its second meeting of the season at The Gregorian, Saturday, February fourth. Nearly one hundred members and guests were present. After the luncheon several matters of interest were brought to the attention of the Club. Dr. Riess introduced a resolution commending the recent action of the Harvard authorities whereby Latin is the foreign language required by that University as one of the entrance examination subjects to be offered by candidates for the A.B. degree. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Club. Professor Knapp announced that contributions to THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY from members of the Club would be welcomed by the editors. He further announced the annual

meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, to be held at Princeton University, April 21-22.

As Superintendent Maxwell, the speaker announced for the meeting, delayed his appearance, an invitation was given to Vice President Greene of the Board of Education to address the Club. He said he was a firm friend of classical studies and promised to do all in his power to retain them in our city high schools. In offering suggestions concerning the teaching of Latin he spoke with diffidence, since he was only a layman addressing the profession; but his ideas were warmly applauded by all present. He urged that pupils be taught the exact meanings of Latin roots and trained to recognize their significance in English derivatives. He emphasized the value of a knowledge of Latin to students of history and law, and recommended that the ancient authors now studied in schools be supplemented by reading great documents written in Latin, such as Magna Charta or the text of great international treaties.

Dr. Maxwell, City Superintendent of Schools, had been advertised to speak on College Entrance Requirements in Latin, but upon being introduced disclaimed previous knowledge of his theme and so talked to the Club on aims and methods in Latin teaching. He decried the vocabularies printed in the school texts of classical authors, which give the special uses of words rather than the root meanings, and from which pupils can obtain little or no etymological knowledge. Roman history should be taught by Latin teachers, as it logically belongs to their department. Sight reading of Latin Dr. Maxwell felt to be chiefly guesswork and as such of slight educational value. The first year's work in Latin as now outlined seemed to him overloaded with hair-splitting distinctions of syntax which are unnecessary and cumbersome. But he paid tribute to the great value of classical training and to the discipline which it alone can furnish.

His speech was followed by a discussion, made brief by the lateness of the hour. Professor Lodge corrected the misapprehension as to the real intention of an exercise in sight reading, which is not guessing at the meaning of Latin previously unseen but is ascertaining the meaning of a passage by applying the knowledge which a pupil has previously acquired. Sight reading in this sense Superintendent Maxwell admitted to be of great educational value. Thumbing repeatedly the leaves of a dictionary wastes much valuable time. Professor Knapp suggested a conference on the subject of first year Latin between the educational authorities of the city and a committee of the Latin Club. As Dr. Maxwell heartily concurred with the suggestion, President Harter was empowered by the Club to appoint such a committee.

ANNA P. MACVAY, Censor.